

Remarks

Status of Claims

Claims 1-23 stand rejected.

35 USC 112 rejection

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph for using the term “may be”. Applicant has amended these claims to replace this language. Applicants believe this rejection is therefore overcome.

35 USC 102 rejection

Claims 1-5, 9, 11, 15-16 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 5,918,431 to Schiedegger ('431).

Applicants claim, in part:

said body including an integral fastener for engaging the first receiver in the siding strip and an opening having a predetermined shape and size for receiving the first portion of the utility-related structure.

Applicants respectfully submit that this reference fails to anticipate the claims for reasons noted in the prior response with respect to Chubb, in addition to the arguments presented herein. Specifically, the Examiner fails to show where the '431 patent includes these limitations. The Examiner points to 18 as fasteners – these are merely slots, not the claimed integral fasteners (ref. Col 4, lines 61-63) – i.e. the '431 patent teaches that screws or nails are driven through these slots 18 – thus teaching away from Applicants' claimed integral fasteners. Furthermore, the fasteners of the '431 patent attach to the wall, not to a receiver in the siding strip as Applicants claim, and as was discussed in Applicants' last response, which is not repeated here for brevity.

The '431 reference shows a 3-piece cover which attaches to a wall, and a cutout is made in the siding. The 3-piece cover merely picture-frames the cutout in the siding (as best shown in Fig 17) and does not attach to the siding as claimed by Applicants. As noted with

respect to Chubb, the '431 reference provides for unsightly gaps to the siding, which is addressed by Applicants invention. Accordingly, the Office Action fails to make a prima facie case and the 35 USC 102 rejection should be withdrawn.

35 USC 103 rejection

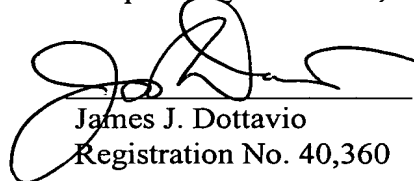
Claims 6-8, 10-14 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over the '431 patent in view of USP 5,878,542 ('542 patent) and 6,408,580 ('580). The Examiner recites the '431 patent for the limitations discussed in the 102 rejection. For the reasons noted above, Applicants respectfully submit that the limitations of the independent claims are not shown or suggested in the cited references, and therefore the 103 rejections should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested. Allowance of claims 1-23 at an early date is solicited. If any questions should arise with respect to the above Remarks, or if the Examiner has any comments or suggestions to place the claims in better condition for allowance, it is requested that the Examiner contact Applicant's attorney at the number listed below.

Applicant authorizes any fees required pertaining to this response be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0568.

Respectfully submitted,



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Version showing changes made

4. (Amended) The component according to claim 1, wherein said body comprises one or more fastener receiving apertures provided in said body, whereby a non-integral fastener [may be] is optionally placed through one of said fastener receiving apertures for assisting in supporting the body adjacent to the wall.